(i) relationship between Trade and Investment; (ii) interaction between Trade and Competition Policy; (iii) Transparency in Government Procurement and (iv) Trade Facilitation. These issues have come to be known as Singapore Issues.

In its Decision of 1 August, 2004 adopting the Framework Agreement providing a road map for continuing negotiations under the Doha Work Programme up to the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the WTO in Hong Kong, China in December, 2005, the WTO General Council, *interalia*, decided to remove the three Singapore issues mentioned at (i) to (iii) above from the Doha Work Programme. It decided to commence negotiations on the remaining Singapore issue, namely, Trade Facilitation. The concerns and reservations raised by developing countries in starting negotiations on Trade Facilitation have largely been met in the modalities agreed for negotiation through extensive provision of Special and Differential Treatment for developing countries including the least developed countries. The negotiations would also aim at having effective provisions of cooperation between customs authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues.

The Singapore Ministerial Declaration, *inter alia*, recognised that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the competent body to set and deal with the core labour standards. It rejected the use of labour standards for protectionist purposes, and agreed that the comparative advantage of countries, particularly, low-wage developing countries, must in no way be put into question. The subsequent Ministerial Conference at Doha also reiterated this decision. Hence, the issue of core labour standards is within the domain of the ILO and not with the WTO.

Proposal to counter trade barriers in WTO talks

964. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) how the Government propose to dispute the non-tariff barriers and the phytosanitary barriers imposed by certain developed countries in the coming WTO talks;

(b) whether any consultations have been held with experts in this field;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what are the other areas that are going to come up for discussion in WTO talks at Hong Kong?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) Pursuant to the Doha Ministerial mandate on 'market access for non-agricultural products', the negotiations to reduce or eliminate non-tariff barriers in particular on products of export interest to developing countries are proceeding in the Negotiating Group on Market Access (NGMA). Based on inputs received from the industry, and consultations with economists and experts, India has notified a list of non-tariff barriers being faced by its exports.

India along with many other developing countries had also raised issues and concerns being faced by them with reference to adequate operationalisation of the Agreements on SPS and TBT so as to contain the trade distortionary impact of sanitary measures and technical regulations especially on exports from developing countries.

(d) Sixth Ministerial Conference of the WTO, to be held in Hong Kong in December 2005, would among other issues review the progress of ongoing negotiations launched under the Doha Work Programme. The Doha Work Programme covers mainly negotiations in Agriculture, Services, Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA), Trade Facilitation and Development Issues.

Rejection of export consignments

965. DR. VIJAY MALLYA:
SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR:
SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large consignments mainly of food items were rejected by the authorities in US, EU, UK, Poland, etc. in the month of May this year;

(b) if so, what were the reasons for such heavy rejection; and